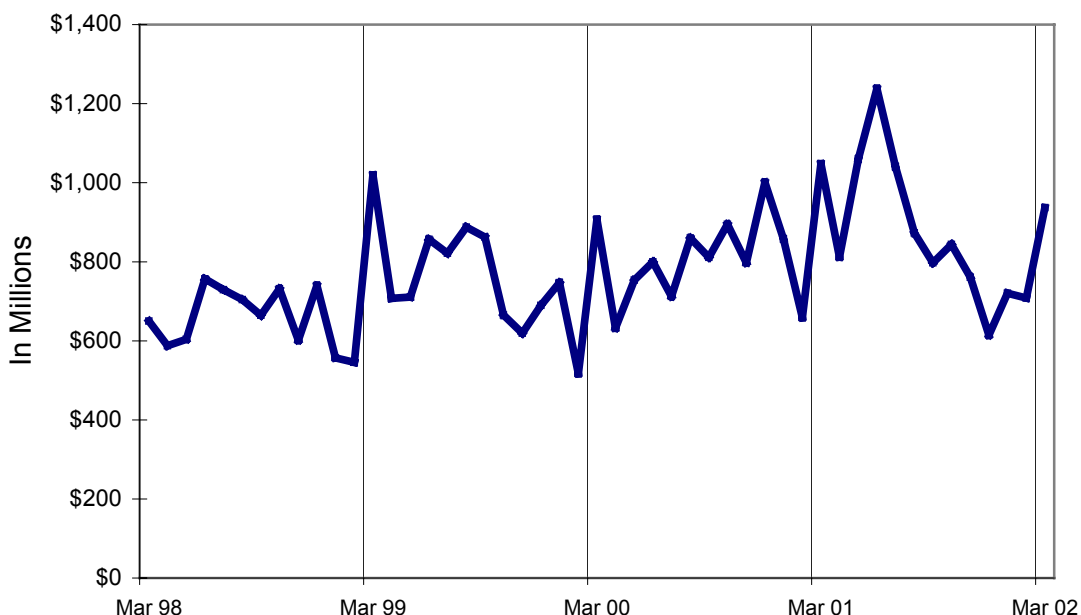


March 2002 Highlights

March is usually a breakout month for the construction industry. The spring thaw historically is a time when there is a bump in the level of activity. This March was typical. The estimated cost of all work authorized by building permits was \$937 million. Residential construction was \$411.2 million (43.9 percent) and nonresidential activity amounted to \$525.8 million (56.1 percent); 523 municipalities reported. In March 2001, the amount of work totaled \$1,047.4 million. Two years ago, in March 2000, the total was \$906.7 million.

**Estimated Cost of Construction
Authorized by Building Permits**



Top Localities

Jersey City in Hudson County, with nearly \$115 million of construction, led all municipalities for the month. The City's construction office issued a permit update for work on a medical center that broke ground last year. The estimated construction cost authorized for the update exceeded \$98 million. Jersey City's construction office also issued a permit update for another \$10.7 million of work on the Goldman Sachs office building on the waterfront. When completed, the tower reputedly will be the largest building in New Jersey.

Other top municipalities for the month were the City of Linden in Union County, Franklin Township in Somerset County, Marlboro Township in Monmouth County, and Hopewell Township in Mercer County. Two big projects accounted for most of the work in Linden. A permit update for a complex under construction for Merck pharmaceuticals accounted for about \$18 million of activity. The Linden City construction office also issued a new construction permit, authorizing \$11.3 million of work for an electric turbine plant for a public utility company. In Franklin, the three largest projects reported were a new nursing home (\$7.1 million), a tenant fit out in a new office building (\$1.3 million), and a \$5-million alteration to a church. A \$10.2-million addition to the local high school accounted for most of the work in Marlboro. The big project in Hopewell was a new parking deck for the Bristol-Myers Squibb Company.

New House Prices

The number of new houses that were completed and began enrollment in a new home warranty program in the first quarter of 2002 was 4,632. The median sales price of these new houses was \$251,056. This was 3.7 percent less than the median reported last quarter. The most expensive new houses were built in Somerset County. Half of the 144 new homes that started enrollment in a new home warranty program in January, February, or March 2002 had a sale price in excess of \$487,500.

New House Prices			
Period	Number of New Houses	Median Sales Price	Percent Change in Sales Price
1996	20,903	\$183,300	
1997	21,640	\$190,000	3.7%
1998	23,884	\$209,980	10.5%
1999	24,479	\$224,496	6.9%
2000	25,058	\$231,728	3.2%
1 st Quarter 2001	4,262	\$242,900	3.0%
2 nd Quarter 2001	5,039	\$248,750	2.4%
3 rd Quarter 2001	5,497	\$256,990	3.3%
4 th Quarter 2001	4,533	\$260,747	1.5%
1 st Quarter 2002	4,632	\$251,056	-3.7%
Source: N.J. Department of Community Affairs, 5/13/02			